

COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM
TOM DAVIS, CHAIRMAN



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
June 29, 2006

Contact: Robert White / Andrea LeBlanc
(202) 225-5074

**Davis, Shuster View Fencing Off FEMA in Senate
Compromise as Step Toward Restoring Independence**

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Emergency Management Subcommittee Chairman Bill Shuster and Government Reform Chairman Tom Davis view the Senate’s compromise to keep the Federal Emergency Management Agency separated from the Department of Homeland Security as a step in the right direction.

Davis and Shuster released the following statement:

“By recombining preparedness with response under one roof and walling FEMA off from DHS, the Senate bill is moving in the right direction. But the most effective and convincing solution is restoring FEMA as the stand alone agency it once was. And ‘independent within DHS’ is a telling description used by Senator Collins. Independent is independent. If the agreement is to ‘fence off’ FEMA, then the fence should be statutory cement rather than a flimsy cubicle divider in the DHS maze. DHS has already proven its terror-focus can dissipate the broader all-hazard functions. Arguments about how difficult it would be for DHS and an independent FEMA to function are based on worst cases and straw men. We’re not sending FEMA to Mars, we’re just giving it the stature and tools it needs to succeed. Coordination would be close and constant. We need to remove the temptation to do it again.

“Both the House and Senate have thoroughly and exhaustively investigated the response to and preparation for Hurricane Katrina. Together, the findings will better prepare local, state and federal emergency professionals for future storms, terror attacks and other disasters. We are pleased the Senate is moving forward and we look forward to working with them to reform our emergency management system.”

#####